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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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THE CONFLICTS OF LIFE.

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."—EPH. VI., 10-18.

The questions which are coming up in modern days are but the details and specifications of those great questions or views which the apostle and the prophets held in their time. As one, looking out upon the meadows from his window, says, "They are all covered with flowers; grass abounds in them all; the spring has brought forth its bounteous results;" but afterward, the botanist comes, and goes into the field, and searches out the individual plants which go to make up this general effect, discovers their habits, classifies them, and tells the peculiar habits of eacn: and as the second man only carries into detail that which the first man observed in the general; so the specific of human nature, the organization of man, the laws of that organization, the economy by which he is placed in such a world as this, and the laws of wisdom by which he shall carry himself throughout, are modern studies; but they are only studies in detail and in specific of the same great field of truth which was made known by the apostles and to the prophets of old.

There is no language whose literature is not marked conspicuously with this one universal observation—conflict, *conflict.* Wherever there has been a singer—a poet; wherever there has been a prophet—a teacher; wherever there has been a observer—a philosopher, there has been just one uniform and universal observation on this subject; and the whole creation groans and travails in pain.

SUNDAY MORNING, April 28, 1872. LESSON: HEBREWS, XII., 1-14. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 668, 905, 725.

"Why should it be so?" say some. "What is the origin of evil?" say others. And various answers have vexed various schools.

I do not propose to go into these things at all. I do not even propose to glance back and ask what is their origin. I accept the fact that the whole world has been a scene, so far back as we have known anything about it, of conflict, and that all men are called into life to take some part in this universal conflict. Life is a struggle with various intermissions and with various emphases of pain or various experiences of development with alternations of victory. But human life is generically a scene of vast conflict—a struggle. No man comes into it but to take part, as a soldier, in the campaign which is laid out before him. When one is born into this world a child, he is born ignorant of everything. All material laws are against him, though they were made for him. He is liable, at every step, to be crushed by not knowing things. Nor can any one at once bring him into the knowledge and harmony of those material laws on which health and happiness depend. He is to find them out after much rubbing and stumbling and bruising conflict. The simplest laws which relate to the well-being of his physical form are to be found out by hard blows, not so many given as taken.

He is just as ignorant of the whole social economy into which he is born. It is not revealed to him in his organization. It is found out by him through long and, too often, weary experience. He is just as ignorant of the civil laws, the economic laws, and the industrial laws. Everything is to be *learned* by him that is to make him a strong, stalwart, victorious man.

If it were not for the paternal shield, the race would very soon die out. So many are the impending laws which, violated, destroy or maim, that if there were no such thing as vicarious suffering, if it were not in the power of one being to put himself in the place of another, if it were not possible for the parent to impute his knowledge and experience to the child, and to suffer for the child, it would be impossible for many to be reared into life, and the race would run out.

This education which begins, then, in material knowledge and law takes two forms. First, we learn to obey law, and we learn it through much tribulation. The lesson of caring for ourselves is learned in a few things. It does not require more than half a dozen burnings of the hand to teach the child to keep out of the fire. Children very soon learn the difference between going down stairs voluntarily and going down in a heap. The most common material laws are learned by children. But the more subtle economy, those laws on which not only present comfort but ultimate strength de-

pends, those laws which lie at the bottom of thrift and wise political economy—these are very seldom learned. Many men never learn them perfectly until obedience to natural law is learned.

Next, we have to learn the control of material law. For by obedience we govern. He that submits to natural law very soon can use it as he pleases. Every one who will pursue a trade, and become an industrial and frugal man, gathering and holding, must have some knowledge of the laws of the globe in which all industry resides and makes itself profitable. So there need to be directions as to obedience to material laws, and as to learning how to govern by the use of them. Every child that comes into life passes through a scene of more or less conflict, followed by punitive results, or results of reward.

There is, next, an inward relation of men's faculties. We receive, we know not what. A child is born ; and he knows no more about himself at five years, whether it be of his body or his soul, than a watch knows of itself when it comes from the hand of the maker; and men, for the most part, pass through the greater portion of their life without any considerable self-knowledge. Instruction, as society is now constituted, is very general. The instruction which is given in the schools, in the family, and in the church, is as yet remote, and does not half cover the ground of human necessity. Not only is every man himself who is born, but in the making of himself there is much of father and mother, or ancestors. He is not an original creature. He is an effect in a long line or series of effects ; and he brings down unconsciously and unknown to himself tendencies and forces which are incongruous, ill-adjusted, and of differing emphasis, as a result of the right-doing or wrong-doing of those who anteceded him. There is a very great range in which hereditary tendencies move, and there is a great variety of them.

There are, first, those tendencies which are favorable. There are those which give a man a constitution of body which favors endurance. Men who are organized with a body which is in harmony with itself, and all parts of which act without friction, or comparatively so, are very apt to be despots on account of that in regard to which they had no sort of choice, and the possession of which is not in any sense a matter of merit to them. They are well organized. Their food digests well. They sleep well. They are always strong and impetuous. They think right straight out to what they want to do. They have a quick sense of the causes which produce certain results. They have endurance. At night they are not worn out by the fatigue of the day which has gone before. How

vigorous they are! How they enjoy activity! And how they despise sluggards! With what contempt do they look upon shiftless men! How they look down upon these slatternly fellows who never seem to have any purpose, or who, if they have a purpose, never stick to it! How little patience they have with those who always go limping on one foot or the other through life!

Here are those men who received from their fathers or grandfathers a sound physical organization which gives them health, fire, power, and continuity in it. They act as though they got it all, and put it into themselves, and as though they were deserving of great credit for having it; whereas it came to them.

"What hast thou that thou hast not received?"

Another man near to them has a scrofulous temperament, but he inherits it, and is not to blame for having it. He has a poor stomach, and his food is not properly digested; but he did not make his stomach. The blood has a hard time to get into his lungs to be be aërated; but that is not his fault, for he did not make his own lungs. When the blood is aërated it goes feebly on its course; the pump does not work very strongly; but it is not his fault, for he did not make his heart. And when the blood gets into the brain—that source of sentiency—it is poor, unrich blood, and it does not make ideas, does not stimulate thought, at all. His whole animal system is deranged. Feebleness is stamped on him as a part of his creation. And how do these strong men triumph over him, and say, "He is not capable of taking care of himself, and he ought to go to the poorhouse!" The world is a poorhouse, and he came into it, or rather was ushered into it, without his own volition, and he is no more responsible for his physical organization than you are, strong man! He is no more to blame for his tendency to vice than you are meritorious for your tendency to virtue. And do you suppose that that man, whose tendencies are downward, starts in an equal race with you when he sets out in the course of life? Has he, with his organization, as good a chance as you have?

It would be well if it were only so, but there are many men who are organized disease. There are many men whose very brain is supersensitive, as the result of the evil conduct of those who went before them. Not only is their brain always on edge, but they are over-sensitive in every passion and appetite.

There are others whose brains are very cool, and who are very calm. They are organized so. God put them into life to run a different race, and with a different vehicle. Who art thou who domineerest in judgment over thy fellow, he carrying in him a body of death—sickness of liver, and sickness of stomach, and irritableness

of brain—and you carrying in you health and strength and courage? Is there no difference between his chances in life and yours? You have your battle somewhere else. He has his battle far down below your field, it may be. With you, as I will show in a moment, it may be be a conflict between selfishness and pride and conscience. You, taking advantage of the dominance of health and vigor and power which is in you, may be a despot, and you may tread men down ruthlessly and selfishly. Your conflict does not come in the lungs, nor in the stomach, nor in the excitability of the brain: it comes in the region of the moral faculties. But there are hundreds and thousands of men with whom the first question is a question of life. "Can I live, at any rate?" they ask themselves. They fight every day for breath, for food, for digestion, for circulation and for nutrition.

I am not indulging in speculations: I am speaking facts. I am not deducing theories: these are things that I know. They are things that you may know if you will look. They are things that every physician and physiologist knows. You cannot preach the doctrine of the struggle of life and ignore them. Men are made so differently, they are started with such different enginery, that the battle of life, in innumerable instances, ranges from far down to far up—from hardly any fighting to hard fighting. Therefore it is that we ought to have very large charity, often, for men who are very great sinners. I know that pretense ascribes to men physical disproportions which do not exist; but there would be no counterfeit if there were not a reality. There is a reality in this. There are multitudes of persons who are children of vice and crime. They are not so without their own fault; but they are so without any such fault as would inhere in you if the same results were developed in you which manifest themselves in them. There is many a man who finds that it requires all that he can do during his whole life to make up for the inequalities which birth gave to him in physical and in mental respects.

There are a great many whose problem in life is not physical, but is inward—namely, the relation of the faculties to each other. I have observed some things in this direction. I do not undertake to discuss the whole realm of psychologic truth here; but this I have noticed: that there are men who have faculties which tend to leaven each other, and which interfere with each other. The good which is in them works clear down to the bottom, so that the evil that is in them is constantly restrained. It feels the effect of the good tendencies of their higher faculties.

I have noticed in other persons that their faculties lie in juxta-

position, but do not keep much company with each other. There is a minority and there is a majority that never act with each other. There are some parts that are bad, and some parts that are good in them; and the parts that are good do not seem to be affected by the parts that are bad, and the parts that are bad do not seem to be affected by the parts that are good. The problem in life with them is how to equalize dynamically these conditions of faculty—how to so bring them up and bring them together that they shall not interfere with each other—so that they shall have harmony and unity of mind by having all their nature run together.

You shall see, sometimes, in the same family, very strange contradictions. The first-born child may be healthy and hearty, and yet may be, as we say, *eccentric, queer, odd.* At times he is well enough; at times he has splendid streaks; but at other times he has most intolerable developments. His faculties are all at jar and discord. The next child, in the same family, may be as smooth as cream. Everything goes along equably with him. He is not subject to violent passions. He has no excessive pride that rams out in one direction, and no selfishness that sweeps like a freshet in another, coming back afterward to great humility and sorrow. There are no alternations in his feelings or actions. Every part seems to harmonize with every other.

In the same household, when one child is born, the line of its life seems to be in one direction, and when another is born its line of life seems to be in another direction. They cross each other's path. The problem of life is not alike in their cases. The consequence is that they cannot understand each other. One person says, "You say that you can obey, and that it is easy for you to obey; but I cannot obey, and it is not easy for me to obey." I hold that every man can obey every requisition which God lays upon him; but the battle is different in different men. It requires all the energy and power of life in some men to do things which other men do without thinking. Some men can be gentle and sweet under provocation. It does not seem to be any more trouble for them than it is for a flower to secrete honey in its cell. There are other men who are sharp and intensive; and it is no more trouble for them than it is for a bee when it goes down head-foremost after honey to carry a sting in the other end. The difference is organic, constitutional, and is to be marked in men.

These are not so much problems as they are facts—facts that are to be taken into consideration in any theology which professes to have a right view of human nature from top to bottom. You cannot range men up by the side of any one law. If men are respon-

sible according to what they have, and not according to what they have not, then that which will be duty for one man will be much diminished before it reaches another man. It is the duty of a man who has eyes, to see clearly; but if a man is half blind, then it is his duty to see according to the eyes which he has. If he is totally blind, it is his duty to see with his fingers—to feel his way. Duties vary according to circumstances. To some, God gives one talent; to some, five; to some, ten; and to the man to whom he gives one, he says, "Make it two;" to the man to whom he gives five, "Make it ten;" and to the man to whom he gives ten, "Make it twenty." He requires them all to be developed, but he makes a difference as to the starting-point of men—as to how much chance they have in the great battle of life.

The struggle of life arises, also, from the bad relation which birth and education institute between men and society. It would seem almost as if men were not born into the same world, so different are they. Compare the condition at birth of the Esquimaux with a child born in a religious household in Brooklyn. Compare his chances for knowledge and culture with such a child's. Compare the chances for life of a gypsy child, wandering from place to place, and taught by his parents in all that is sharp and deceptive and evil, with the chances for life of one of your own children. Compare the chances of the child of a negro man, even in America, with the chances of the children of the Caucasian races. What expectations in life has he compared with theirs?

Men are born into life so related to society and its remunerations and penalties that they might almost as well have been born into different worlds. Every one has a peculiar struggle which belongs to the place where he was born. There are children of converted families who are born into positions where all circumstances favor them. There are children who are protected from vice and temptation on every side. There are children who have model parents whose example is a perpetual blessing to them. But on the other hand there are those all of whose circumstances, from the beginning, are unfavorable to their development in right directions. When I look at my own childhood it is iridescent. There were rainbows above every storm. The sun rose and spoke a language to me which I shall never forget; and when the sun went down its glory was around about me. Years came—summer and winter—Sabbaths and week-days—with all their various associations, which have been a literature of beauty to me. I can think of nothing that is more restful to my mind, and nothing that quicker brings tears to my eyes, than the old country home where my mother

brought me forth, and where I was surrounded with everything that could contribute to love and consolation. But, when I speak of the beauties of childhood, and the memories of home, are there some here who learned the language of oaths at the lips of their mother? Are there children here whose first remembrance of mother is that of seeing her reeling drunk? Are there children here who remember that their father's coming was like the coming of a wind-storm with rage and violence, and whose childhood was an experience of blows and kicks and cuffs? Are there children here who knew nothing of tenderness, or who escaped out of the region of home as one would escape from hell? And what are their associations? What have they in store that came down with them from the past? What was their early life? Mine was as a silver arrow shot from a golden bow at success. Have they the same chance that I had, and that your child has?

Consider, also, that the moment one begins to move forward in life every step is a conflict, if he undertakes to move according to any high ideal of right—if he undertakes, for instance, to live a life in which the principles of truth and honesty and goodness are to be held inviolate. I think that the time when one goes out of the household is the most royal period of his life. A young man who has received an education, who has a conception of what is becoming in manhood, who is sensitive to the honor of truth and to the dishonor of untruth, whose aim is noble, and who is just stepping out into life, presents a sight than which there is none at once more beautiful and more sad. It is sad because the moment he begins to act with high purposes he will find ten thousand fiendish influences brought to bear upon him. If he love the truth, ten thousand things will tempt him to warp and break it. If he love honor, he will find everything tending to lead him to lower the standard of his honor. It is hard for a man to take the ideal of honor and truth and rectitude and plow through life with it. Many a root will throw the plow out of the furrow, and there is many a stone which it will catch against. Life is a hard field in which to learn to plow. Men meet all these things in life. It is seldom that a man can carry an ideal of any kind straight through life without meeting conflict, disaster, and often defeat.

You see, from these views, that the conflict and struggle to which we are all called is not a conflict and struggle that springs merely from our misconduct. If men tell you that persons have conflicts in life because they are so bad themselves, you may fearlessly deny it. You may say that they have a single section of the truth, but that the broad sphere of men in this life embraces many more mat-

ters than they are themselves responsible for. There are doubtless many evils that they allow to triumph which they could vanquish, and for which they are to blame; but when you consider where men are born; when you consider with what temperaments and constitutions they are created; when you consider what temptations they are subject to; when you consider how little knowledge they have of themselves and of the influences that act to draw them away from good and toward evil, while there is much to blame, there is much to pity; while there is much to lead us to thank God for favorable circumstances there are many more which lead us to pity men, and hold them as not only blameworthy and sinful, but as having gone through an experience of having been sinned against mightily. Causes that inhere in the very structure of the material globe, causes that are inherent in the very organization of a man's own nature and soul—the body he lives in, the way in which he is put together in that body, the society into which he is launched, the institutions that meet him, the varied experiences which he goes through—these great influences, these mighty forces, which the apostle spoke of, are at work. It does not at all lower the sense of a man's responsibility in that sphere in which he is reponsible, nor of his guilt for those things which he ought not to do, having power to restrain himself; but there is a great deal more in this world than sin. There is much that is called sin which is constitutional, and which belongs to men, not because they will do wrong, but because it pleases God to put them where they are obliged to fight their way out of animalism into manhood.

The conflict and struggle, then, is so universal that we must believe that it is the design of God—that it is organic. I do not believe that sin was ever created by God purposely; but that constitution which works out into sin, and which before it comes to it has in it an element of pain and of penalty, I believe is divinely guided. You cannot look at the world as it is, you cannot count up the facts of nations and individuals as they are, and escape, it seems to me, the deduction that the world was constructed, not as a harmonious machine by the hand of the Lord, but as a vast realm of experience through which men were to be emancipated from their lower nature and condition, and brought up to a higher plane, and into better conditions.

So, then, when it is said, in the Word of God, *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,* it is not an interjected, novel truth: it is what nature, if we had been enlightened enough to understand her, would have said. All things in nature say that exertion, effort, struggle, with pain and sorrow, are a part of the experience of human life.

Why did not the apple-tree grow on the top of a hill? and why did not the slope of the hill run down into every man's cellar, so that every apple that dropped should roll into a bin in his cellar without any effort on his part? How nice that would be! Why did not every man find, as snails do, a house on his back, so that he would be saved the trouble of building a house, and learning how to build? Why is it that everybody was not healthy and wise and good? Why were not all sparrows bluejays, and all doves eagles, and all eagles doves? Why was not everything something, and something everything? In short, what did God make everything that he did make for? When you find out, tell me, will you?

This we know: that the world was so made that men, emerging from lower conditions, come up to higher ones step by step, and that every upward step is like a new birth, and has its birth-pangs. As the child comes crying into the world, and the mother moans, so every added ten years, climacteric—the sevens, the fourteens, the twenty-ones—every period of advance—has been through other wombs, other births, with other cryings and other sufferings. And so it is that every step of the way down to the last, it only needed one divine authentication to show that this world was built so that by struggle and suffering it should come up to final perfection—namely, the authentication of God's own word.

We have the scene of the Sufferer who was lifted on Calvary. Men say, "*My* God cannot suffer." Then he cannot be God to me. Men say, "Itwas not just that Christ should suffer for the sins of the world." Is it unjust that the mother should suffer for the inexperience of the child? That doctrine would turn every cradle upside down. To suffer for others is the highest mark of nobleness and heroism. The whole world is suffering, and by suffering is coming up—or might come up. That is the law. That is the direction. That is the true hand which points to the light sky. It is wailing and sighing that lead up toward manhood. It is not suffering in excess, it is not enduring beyond what we are able to bear, but it is pain and sorrow and trouble adapted to our condition, that is the medicine by which we are healed, and the hammer by which we are released from the imprisoning rock, and the harrow or plow by which the harvest is cultivated. The way toward perfection is a way toward strife and tears; and over it stand the cross and the Sufferer who died for the world to make harmony between the universe beyond and the experience of men on this side.

No man can pick out his own campaign in life. Every man must fight the battles that meet him, whatever they are. Nothing is more common than for men to justify their own cowardice and

defection in life by saying, "If I had been in such circumstances I could have done so and so." Your trouble in fighting the battle of life is that you break down at every step. You see others fighting with the tireless wing of the eagle, but you fly from tree to tree, and take breath at every step, and say, "Oh, if God had made me an eagle I could have taken care of all the troubles that I have down here, but I am a sparrow, and every little bit of a hawk, and every owl of the night, and the shrike, and the bluejay attack me, and how could I, small as I am, get out of the way? If I had only been an eagle—" Oh, yes, if you had only been an eagle! But you are not made an eagle; and the question is simply this: Will you grumble and die as the fool dieth? If God chose to put you into life at the point of vigor, there is an end in that campaign—there is a disclosure in that problem. There is victory in every one of these things. There may not be victory in them at the present time; but I believe that there will be victory in them beyond the present. I believe that when you come to measure and see what the fruition of the future is compared with the present struggle, you will be satisfied with the wisdom of God in the economy of life. If you could know now what you will know by and by, you would see that what God is doing for you is better than what you desire for yourself.

I have seen men who said, "Who could expect a man to do anything who was stricken in life as I have been? What do you suppose a man can do who has to work twelve hours a day, and is only just able to get his bread and cheese, and sweats at that?" What do I suppose he can do? I suppose he can do a great deal. I suppose that poor living and high thinking are worth every man's endeavor. A man who can take the place which God puts him in, and stick to it, and fight it through, and stand a man every inch, has, I think, awaiting him, an estate of glory such as has not been known in this world.

"Why," you say, "I could have borne this yoke, only it cuts right across the sore spot on my neck."

When I was a boy, nothing suited me so well as to have my father whip me when my clothes were on. Then I could bear it with the utmost equanimity. It was when he took me at advantage, in the morning, before I was dressed, that I did not like whipping.

I have heard many people say, "If God only tempered affliction so that it came on the spot where I did not feel it, I could bear it." But what sort of affliction would that be? What does the bullock, with his tough, hard skin, care for the yoke? But if it be a young ox, whose neck is yet tender, on which the yoke is put, how hard it

is for him to bear it! And so in youth it is hard for persons to bear affliction. But that way comes patience. That way comes self-control. That way comes knowledge.

Now, men must take themselves as they are, and they must take troubles where they come, and they must do the best they can in the place where God puts them. You may not know the meaning of the trials that you are called to endure, and you may not like them. I do not suppose anybody likes troubles. We all like laziness. We would all like to go to heaven through self-indulgence. But that is not the way that men were meant to go to heaven. That is the way to make sloths, but not fully-developed men. We want to have our path made clear. We want all the hills brought low and all the valleys exalted. We want all rocks taken out of the way. And then we would like to walk as on holiday occasions, with music and banners and acclamations. We would like to be crowned soldiers before we have fought the battle; but it is not then that God crowns us. It is after many campaigns and much night-and-day work. It is after we have been toughened in the struggle, and have come out veterans. It is after we have faithfully done our duty, and have had the experience which a faithful performance of duty alone can bring. Then it is that our manhood comes to us, and then it is that we are crowned, and are worthy of a place in the midst of the heavenly host.

There is one thing which we do not take out of this world with us. No man, I think, will take his house through the portals of the grave. No man will take through the grave his body. That drops at the grave, thank God. No man will take his bonds and mortgages through the grave. No man will take through the grave his pictures, or statues, or books. No man will carry through the grave those dishes which are full of delight to the palate. There are ten thousand things which will, as a part of the furnishing of the school-house here, be left behind, as the child, when he goes to the college or the university, leaves in the school-house his grammar and arithmetic and spelling-book. And when we come to the grave's mouth we leave many things behind us. But there is no man that has learned patience who does not carry that through. There is no man that has learned the art of subduing pride who does not carry that through. There is no man who has gained the lore of love who does not carry that through. There is no man that has developed in himself any Christian virtue who does not carry that through. You will not learn one attribute of manhood that you will leave behind you. You will not cultivate a single Christian trait that you will not carry with you. Every particle of

truth or love or goodness that you acquire here will be yours in the life which is to come. All the higher elements which you possess in this world you will carry with you beyond the grave—and some of you will have the smallest load that you ever carried, if you do not look out!

I remark again, that in this universal conflict of life, the victory is not to be looked for outwardly. You will remember that when Paul had that strange, mysterious thorn in the flesh, whatever it was, he prayed thrice that it might be removed from him; and the Lord answered, "My grace shall be sufficient for you. I will not take away the trouble, but I will give you a grace that shall enable you to bear it, and give you a victory over it." In this world we frequently gain victories in ourselves, although outwardly we seem to suffer defeat. There are many men who are not prospered when they seem to be prospered. It is the worst part of them that is prospered when they are only prospered outwardly. Many men who have gone down in bankruptcy are themselves conscious that there is something in them that is better, sweeter, more noble than material prosperity has been able to develop. They are conscious that they are more men in their trouble than they would be if they were out of it. Grief opens the door of heaven to many souls.

Just go to those who sit in the shadow. There is many a man who has sought success, and struggled for it, and come short of it, and who seems to be defeated, but who, after all, has had a victory. The best side of him has been victorious. That which made him victorious was more manliness; it was more godliness; it was more of that spirit of hope by which we are saved. It was that faith which inherits heaven by foresight.

If there be those, therefore, who seem to themselves to be overborne; if there be those who say, "Look at me: here I am, right in the middle of life with nothing to stand upon," let them take comfort from this view.

There are those who watch men, and make contrasts. One says, "Do you know Mr. Bumblebee? He never had any of the virtues, but see how he has rolled up money! See what property he has got! Do not you know how at the last Black Friday he was the only man who did not suffer? Do you not remember how he managed so that every thing came into his dish? He got everything into his hands, and then just as he saw that there was going to be a smash he got rid of it; and the next day, when everybody else went down, he went up. And so it has been with him for twenty or thirty years."

I have seen beetle bugs, in summer, on the road, rolling up and

rolling up their pile; but I never felt the least disposition to be one of those bugs!

On the other hand, I have heard men say, "See that man! It seems really mysterious that one so adapted to do good, one who has always been so kind and generous, should be where he now is. He is thrown aside entirely. All men respect him; but they cannot stop to notice him. They are too busy with their own affairs. He is bankrupt, and will never get on his feet again. He is of no account. His name is no longer on the commercial register. He is never seen on the street where he used to be so busy. He failed, and is forgotten. The waves have rolled over him. He came to nothing."

Go trace out that man. Trace him by the flowers which spring up by his feet. Trace him by the sweetness of his teaching to children. Trace him by the noble conceptions which he has given them of the future, and which will breed some of the noblest men of the present generation. See him consoling the poor, and teaching the dying how to hope. See him when his own hour comes. He is almost a pauper. How few follow him to the grave, as he is carried in an open wagon in the country by a plain man who has got used to burying folks, and who cannot be supposed to have much sentiment on such subjects! He is put into the ground, and the dirt is shoveled on him without much regard to delicacy. But oh, what a funeral that is! I cannot see for the wings that flash. I cannot see for the multitude of those who have come at God's command to take the soul of his servant up through the heavens. They move as the leaves move when winds sweep through the summer forests. They move as the waves move upon the sea. I hear them shout. I see the battlements gleam. I hear the universal outcry, "Well done, and welcome!" as he enters the heavenly land. Give me his poverty, give me his obscurity, give me his disappointments of success, if they will only work in me such hope and faith and love as they worked in him! Woe to the man who is bankrupt outside and inside too! Blessed is the man who is bankrupt outside that he may come to his inside and give it room to expand!

Most men, I remark once more, come to their conflicts in life as if they were evils, pure and unmixed; but if the facts which I have stated are true, and the general view of the moral constitution of this world by which men are wrought out by suffering as well as by joy is a correct view, then for us to seek ease, and to try to dodge and run away from any conflict which comes up before us, is as foolish as for a soldier on the field of battle to run away from the enemy. There are stragglers in the army who are timid and fearing,

and who in the day of battle are not to be found; but good soldiers, hardened in the field, are pleased by nothing so much as being drawn into the conflict. When there is fighting to be done they want to have a hand in it, and they say, "Put me where I can get at the enemy." And they chafe if they are thrown behind the hill as a reserve, and are allowed to take no part in the battle. And welcome to their ears is the cry, "You are ordered up." And out they run, and fall upon the foe, and strike as if they were but iron. They pitch into the fight with eagerness and gladness. There are no laggards among them. There are none of them that want easy places, or that would like to fight out of range. Every one of them wants to meet his foeman face to face and hand to hand. And yet, in life, in a greater battle, and under a greater Captain, how many there are who are afraid to meet the conflict, and seek in every way to avoid it, and bring up their children with the effeminate idea that the great happiness of life consists in fortifying themselves against dangers, and making themselves so high and so strong that nothing can get at them.

It is better to bring up your children nobly to endure whatever is put on them. Do not seek temptation or danger; but when in the exercise of duty God brings you face to face with temptations or dangers, do not be a coward and run away from the field in the day of battle. You are called of God to your conflict, and you must meet it manfully, every one of you.

Once more: Remember that it is not a vagrant and aimless suffering which we go through in this life. If you look over the face of the deep in its stormy hour, it would seem as though the demon of confusion had possession of the sea; and the spots of hideous light which come through the clouds seem more hateful than even the raging of the waves; but after all, there is not a drop of the ocean that stirs except under the influence of a law which is as steady as that which holds the oak to its place. The wind and the water move according to laws which God established in eternity. And in this great and wild conflict of life there is a power that administers and controls. There is a supervising Providence. There is a loving heart of God. There is a God who is willing to inflict pain, as he declares, because he loves. As a father chastises his child that he may whip the evil out of him, and whip virtues into him, so God chastises those whom he loves.

If you be shielded from trouble and care and annoyance; if you be surrounded by circumstances which make the present hour delightful; if you have no conflict and bear no burden; if you do not suffer, then God says that you are bastards. If you are God's

children, and if you have the very touch of manhood in you, it is because you have had such an idea of what was right and pure and true and noble in this world that you have strained yourself to the work and borne trials manfully.

Under the supervision of Providence every man's conflict is marked of God. Every man is helped who will permit the ingress of the Divine Spirit to his soul.

The battle of life is a battle the result of which we need not fear. It is a battle which God himself guides. As in the field of battle the general is not seen, but from afar off gives his commands, saving himself so that if the battle go wrong he still may counsel it, so God hides himself; but we are watched by him, and by and by the cloud will roll away, and then, sitting in the inexpressible grandeur of love and mercy and beauty, He that hath helped us all the days of our lives shall be seen by us, and we shall be welcomed where there is no more conflict, or sin, or sorrow, but eternal manhood and victory and joy.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We thank thee, our Heavenly Father, that there remaineth a rest for the people of God. How full of storm is life! How full of care and uncertitude! What agitations are continually beating upon us as the surf beats upon the shore! We are not sure of to-morrow. How bright soever the day may be, storms may be chasing it in the night! We perpetually pass from sunshine to cloud; from summer to winter; from calms to storms. We have a moment's rest, and then are scared away till our wing is weary with flying from danger. We are perpetually chased up and down, whensoever we attempt to live according to thy law, sought out of pride, overwhelmed with vanity, selfishness, avarice and envy, tried and tempted, and too often overcome. Our way is wearisome while our conscience wakes; and when our conscience sleeps, and we plunge onward, and get into inextricable trouble, O Lord, then comes despondency and despair. And so we go through dark and light. So we go over the rough and over the smooth. So we are stangers and pilgrims, who confess that this is not their home; that they are seeking another country and a better one. And we rejoice to believe that far up above every storm there is still a calm and the shining of the sun. So above all the trouble, and all the temptation, and all the trial of life, there is a rest that remaineth. The lights which are blown out here are not extinguished there. The sobs and the wails which we hear so plentifully here die long before they reach that shore of peace. No sorrow stains its air. No contentions beat like fierce winds upon that land. Into it from off the stormy sea have run how many voyagers! Out of our arms some have flown as the dove flies away—little ones; and we are glad that

they are saved from so much that awaited their earthly experience. From our side how many have gone of our companions! They are at rest; we toil on.

Grant, we beseech of thee, that we may feel more and more the goodness of God in what we call bereavements and afflictions, and that there may come to us, through our sympathy with what is high and benevolent and generous and just, more and more a sense of the divine mercy in chastisement. Though thou art hiding thy hand under the dark robe, may we never fail to see that it is the hand pierced and stained with blood for us. Though we at times wonder why the bitter cup is put to our lips, may we remember that it is the cup of which we take only a sip, but which thou didst drink to the dregs. And while we see thy providence thwarting us at every step, may we hear thee saying, "What I do now ye know not; but ye shall know hereafter." Into that great hereafter may we put our cares, and all our reasoning questions, and all our doubts and fears, and all our unbelief, and feel that God will make that plain in the end which is obscure now by reason of our ignorance.

O Lord, grant that high above every other experience may be the belief that thou art, and that thou art good, so that we may lean our whole weight upon thee; so that we may not be daunted from trusting thee by any apparition of terror. May we disbelieve everything but thee; and may we believe thee to be a God of love whose justice is but the instrument of love, and who is seeking everywhere, in heaven, and on earth, and throughout creation, to purge and to cleanse; to give strength to weakness, to heal sinfulness, and to lift up and perfect the whole kingdom of men.

O Lord our God, we triumph and rejoice in thee. How poor we are! How we stumble every day! How full of mixtures of sin are our best things! How languid is our compassion! How strong is anger in us! How poor is our humility! How dominant is our pride! How do we snatch selfishly on every side, and return with empty hands which should be stretched out in bounty. If we look at ourselves, and think of what thou art and what we have been, and have better and nobler ideals of life, we are discontented with ourselves, and are ashamed, and do not dare to lift up our faces toward thee, even though we know thou art our Father, and dost heal our iniquity and transgression and sin, and art long-suffering. Oh! grant that thy goodness may lead us to repentance; that we may not tread it under foot, and plunge headlong into darkness and misrule and rebellion. We pray that thou wilt vouchsafe to all who are in thy presence this morning the manifestation of thyself with them. Nay, accept the gladness of hearts that come full of thanksgiving to-day; that, looking upon thy dealings with them, and their own experience, have occasion to make mention of thy name with songs and thanksgiving.

We pray that thou wilt grant that no hearts may forget to be grateful for all the mercies which thou dost bestow upon them, though they come thickset with judgments. We pray that we may remember, day by day, how thou hast attended us unwearledly, bounteously supplied us with outward blessings and inward consolation, and opened wider and wider the horizon of hope, and granted us by faith more and more insight into the spiritual, and more and more nearness to the eternal world.

Grant, O Lord, that we may have perpetual gratitude that no wild chance is driving through the universe, and that God rules, and that it is love that is providence, and that in the end all things shall appear, and we shall be satisfied. Therefore may we be content, striving against sin, and overcoming whatever is evil in us, so far as in us lies. Here and there seeking the best things, may we rejoice that Christ is providence, that

God is providence, and that all things shall work together for good to them who love thee.

We pray that thou wilt bless any who are feeling present and smarting afflictions; and grant to them help according to their several needs. O Lord, administer consolation to them. May they find straugely by their side the Spirit of all consolation—the Spirit of promise—the Comforter.

We pray that thou wilt make houses upon which the cloud rests light with thy presence. Wilt thou dry up the tears of those who weep, May those who are mourning find consolation in thee. May those who are in trials and perplexities, who are bearing burdens which seem at times heavier than they can carry, know that God carries their burdens for them, though they think it not, and that he who will not let a sparrow fall unheeded, counts them as worth many sparrows. May they trust when they behold, and may they trust when they can no longer see. May they trust and rejoice in the Lord when there is nothing else in which they can trust and rejoice.

We pray that thou wilt be near to those who are in the perplexities of daily duty, fighting the battle of life manfully, and who are overwearied and overburdened. As their day is, so may their strength be also.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing, to-day, to rest upon the poor and outcast, upon the afflicted of every name. Send forth those who shall minister consolation unto them.

Grant that this day of rest may bring consolation and rest and rejoicing to those who are not gathered in churches; to those who have no friends; to those who are neglected; to those who are poor and ignorant, and do not know the meaning of blessings that are wrapped up in this Lord's Day.

We pray that thou wilt bless all thy churches, and all thy ministers who shall preach to-day; and may the Gospel have power, and may it sink as good seed into the soil of the hearts of men, and bring forth fruit a hundredfold.

Be pleased to bless this land. Remember the President of these United States, and all who are in authority with him. Remember the Governors of the several States, and their counselors. Remember judges and magistrates. Remember all who execute the laws of the land. Grant that they may be God-fearing men who shall faithfully administer justice between man and man.

Bless all who are in the Army and Navy, and who serve their country at home or abroad. Remember all those who are in ignorance, and who are seeking the way of knowledge out of bondage. Bless our schools and academies and colleges and universities, and all the sources of light and intelligence.

Unite the hearts of this great people. May those who come to us from afar mingle with us, and become one with us; and may wise laws, temperately executed, may wise institutions having in them the welfare of the nation, more and more prevail against animalism and injustice and wantonness; and may this great people be held together by the living spirit of the Gospel of Christ Jesus. And may its prosperity lead all things from darkness and barbarity toward intelligence and true and undefiled religion. And grant that the day may be hastened when all nations shall know the Lord the world over. And may all thy glowing promises be fulfilled.

Hear us, O Lord, in these our supplications, and answer us according to the multitude of thy tender mercies. And to thy name, Father, Son, and Spirit, shall be praises, everlasting. *Amen.*

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